laid off as a town, and called Smithville, in honor of Governor Benjamin Smith, and it retained that name until 1887 when it began to be called Southport. Southport has been the home of most of the Cape Fear pilots for nearly a hundred years. Its salubrious climate and kindly inhabitants make it one of the most attractive and wholesome winter and summer resorts in our country. Its harbor is spacious and its deep water would float the largest battleship of our navy. Its possible importance as a coaling station for steamers from the south outward bound, and its prospective usefulness to the Panama-Canal traffic in that respect, is attracting attention to it as a convenient port of call.

Of this interesting town our venerable ex-president of the University of North Carolina, Hon. Kemp P. Battle, has said:

"Near the mouth of the beautiful Cape Fear River, on its right bank, is a pleasant little town. It is fanned by the delicious sea breezes; huge live oaks gracefully shade its streets. In its somber cemetery repose the bodies of many excellent people. Its harbor is good. It is on the main channel of the river. From its wharves can be seen not far away the thin white line of waves as they break on the sandy beach. But the ships to and from its neighbor, Wilmington, pay little tribute as they pass and repass. Its chief fame is that it contains the court-house of the county of Brunswick. Its name is Smithville.

"Opposite the good old town is a desert island composed of undulating sand-hills, with here and there occasional green flats and dwarfed pines to relieve the general monotony. It is exposed to the full fury of the Atlantic storms. New Inlet once poured a rapid stream between the island and the mainland. But daring and industrious man now seeks to force by walls of stone the impetuous floods through the river channel to the west, to float larger ships up the river to the port of Wilmington. Its southern end forms the dangerous cape which Mr. George Davis so eloquently describes.

"The University of North Carolina has amid its group of buildings one in its shape and portico and columns imitating a Greek temple. Its basement was until recently the home of the State Agricultural Experiment Station, which has done so much to protect our farmers from fraud, but now it is the laboratory of the professor of chemistry. Above is a long and lofty room containing the library of the University. On its shelves are many ancient books of great value, but vacant spaces plead piteously for new books in all the departments of literature and science. The name of this building is 'Smith Hall.'



"What member of the widely spread family of Smith has thus given his familiar name to a county town, an island, and a university hall? His Christian name was Benjamin. He was an active officer of the Revolution, a governor of our State, and the first benefactor of the State University.

"Governor Smith had many vicissitudes of fortune. In his youth he was aide-de-camp to Washington in the dangerous but masterly retreat from Long Island after the defeat of the American forces. He behaved with conspicuous gallantry in the brilliant action in which Moultrie drove the British from Port Royal Island and checked for a time the invasion of South Carolina. A Charleston paper of 1794 says: 'He gave on many occasions such various proofs of activity and distinguished bravery as to merit the approbation of his impartial country.' After the strong Union superseded the nerveless Continental Confederation, when there was danger of war with France or England, he was made general of militia, and when later, on account of the insults and injuries of France, our government made preparations for active hostilities, the entire militia of Brunswick County, officers and men, roused to enthusiasm by an address from him full of energy and fire, volunteered to follow his lead in the legionary corps raised for service against the enemy. The confidence of his countrymen in his wisdom and integrity was shown by their electing him fifteen times to the Senate of the State. From this post he was chosen by the General Assembly as our chief executive in 1810, when war with England was constantly expected, and by large numbers earnestly desired.

"The charter of the University was granted in 1789. The trustees were the great men of that day—the leaders in war and peace. Of this band of eminent men Benjamin Smith was a worthy member. He is entitled to the signal honor of being the first benefactor of the infant institution, the leader of the small corps of liberal supporters of education in North Carolina. For that reason alone his name should be revered by all the long line of students who call the University their Alma Mater and by every one who desires the enlightenment of our people."

The communication between Southport and Wilmington in olden times was by a sloop which carried passengers and probably the United States mails. The daily schedule was protected